

MEMORANDUM

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## THE WHITE HOUSE

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/ WASHINGTON  
SPOKE

May 25, 1970

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger

SUBJECT: Enemy Losses in Cambodia

Attached are preliminary estimates by Director Helms and Secretary Laird of the impact on the enemy of the operations in Cambodia thus far. The CIA report (TAB A), which has been revised (TAB B) to reflect the recent decrease in machine gun ammunition, makes the following points of particular interest:

ARMY DIA OSD Review  
Completed

- The enemy's stockpiles in Cambodia probably contain 9 to 15 months' resupply requirements for lower II, III and IV Corps, or between 9,000 and 15,000 tons of supplies.

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INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

- As a percentage of estimated enemy stockpiles of food, ammunition and weapons in Cambodia, the enemy has already lost\*:

- . food: 38% to 65%

- . ammunition: 55% to 92%

- . weapons and equipment: 3% to 6%\*\*

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- Even with the recent downward adjustment, the ammunition captured compared to estimates of enemy ammunition stocks is very substantial. The ammunition is equivalent to at least 154 days of resupply requirements for enemy forces in lower II, III and IV Corps.

\* Figures throughout have been adjusted to reflect latest MACV reporting.

\*\* This figure is somewhat misleading since only the weight of weapons captured in Cambodia is compared with weapons and equipment estimated to be in caches. Equipment in the caches is believed to be about half of the total weight in this category. Adjusted figures would be 6% to 12%.

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-- With respect to enemy food losses, it is significant that:

- . Although a huge amount of rice has been captured, this item is more easily replaced than weapons or ammunition since rice can be obtained in Cambodia and South Vietnam where there are bumper crops this year.
- . The food captured is more than two-thirds of that seized throughout South Vietnam in 1969.
- . More than a half year's requirement for enemy forces in southern South Vietnam has been discovered.

-- The 93 tons of weapons found thus far is relatively low compared with other items captured and is only 21% of the enemy weapons seized throughout South Vietnam in 1969.

-- The only other large "strategic" stockpiles captured in the past were found during two sweeps of the Plaine des Jarres in Laos over a period of seven months in 1969. A comparison with the Cambodian caches indicates that:

- . More than twice the food and weapons have already been captured in Cambodia.
- . Although the weight of ammunition captured in Cambodia is only half the Laotian totals, three times as many rounds of rifle and machine gun ammunition have been captured in Cambodia. However, a much smaller quantity of mortars and large rockets has been uncovered. This may indicate that substantial caches of mortars and rockets remain to be discovered in the Cambodian base areas.

-- In estimating the enemy's ability to replace losses in Cambodia, the report states that:

- . Because the enemy maintains large stockpiles in the Laotian panhandle, many of their losses can be replenished within a few months.
- . The Cambodian supply losses will impinge mainly on the enemy's posture in III and IV Corps. The large stocks in South Vietnam should be adequate for the time being to support the relatively low levels of enemy activity in South Vietnam and even permit an occasional high point.

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Although the rainy season will make replenishment difficult, it will not be impossible.

Secretary Laird's memorandum (Tab C) makes the following points of interest:

- The amount of ammunition captured in Cambodia is equivalent to 62-82 days of enemy requirements.\* [It should be noted, however, that based on experience over the past four quarters, we have captured:
  - . 86 days of the estimated total enemy requirements in South Vietnam (nearly three months).
  - . 257 days of the estimated enemy ammunition expenditure (more than eight months).]
- On the basis of estimates of rockets fired by the enemy:
  - . More than nine months of enemy expenditure of small rockets, mortar, and recoilless rifle rounds have been captured.
  - . A 64-day supply of large rockets has been captured. (On the basis of experience during the past six months, this is equivalent to a 91-day supply).
- Based on estimates of inputs through Laos and Sihanoukville it is speculated that enemy stocks of ammunition and weapons in South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia range from 12,000 to 30,000 tons. If these estimates are valid, we may have already captured from 4.4% to 11% of these stocks.
- During the last dry season the enemy moved supplies through the Laotian panhandle at the rate of 100 tons per day and probably could transport about 25 tons a day during the rainy season. At this rate, the enemy may be able to replace losses of weapons and ammunition during the rainy season in about 53 days.\*\*

\* This estimate includes ammunition expended, captured and interdicted throughout South Vietnam.

\*\* This estimate is strictly a guess. It also does not appear to contain an estimate of enemy losses in transit due to interdiction efforts, makes the assumption that all of the supplies transported consist of weapons and ammunition, and does not include the weight of packaging and crating which decreases by 1/3rd the weight of hardware moved.

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- In assessing the success of the Cambodian operations, it is important that we do not succumb to the temptation of concentrating on day-to-day results, thereby losing sight of our strategic objectives.

As both the CIA and DOD assessments point out, a significant element in any realistic analysis of the impact of these operations is some valid estimate of the extent of the enemy's stockpiles existing prior to the move into the sanctuaries. Unfortunately, the estimates provided necessarily contain a high guess factor. In approaching the problem the CIA has relied heavily on intelligence estimates of the level of materiel the enemy tries to maintain in the stockpiles. The Defense figures are based on estimates of what has been supplied through the Ho Chi Minh Trail and Sihanoukville.

In assessing the impact of the operations, Director Helms has concluded that supply losses in Cambodia already have inflicted a sharp blow to the enemy's logistical system. However, he cautions against overstating the significance because the enemy retains large stockpiles intact in Laos and South Vietnam and has the capability to mount a major resupply effort. Secretary Laird emphasizes that the impact of the Cambodian operations should be measured in terms of the effect on troop withdrawals, Vietnamization, reduction in friendly casualties and stimulation of meaningful negotiations.

Although analyses of the impact on the enemy are still preliminary, it is obvious that enemy losses measured both in tangible and psychological terms have been considerable.

Attachments

Tabs A, B, and C

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Dr. Henry A. Kissinger

**Secret**

No Foreign Dissem.

I think you will find the attached memorandum assessing enemy supply losses in Cambodia of interest.

*Rich*  
Richard Helms

Attachment - 1  
Copy No. 2 - Intel Memo - SC 06945/70 -  
Enemy Supply Losses in Cambodia.

20 May 1970  
(DATE)

FORM NO. 101  
1 AUG 54 REPLACES FORM 10-101  
WHICH MAY BE USED.

(47)

DIRECTORATE OF  
INTELLIGENCE

# Intelligence Memorandum

*Enemy Supply Losses In Cambodia*

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**Secret**

ER IM 70-70

May 1970

Copy No. 2

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
Directorate of Intelligence  
May 1970

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Enemy Supply Losses In Cambodia

Introduction

This memorandum is a preliminary assessment of enemy supply losses in Cambodia. Analysis is based on reporting of the first 17 days of Allied ground actions. Judgments are necessarily tentative; a definitive analysis must await the completion of the current operations when a full and final accounting of the losses becomes available. Furthermore, the present analysis was complicated by the substantial degree of uncertainty about the levels of stockpiles that the enemy possessed prior to the US/GVN moves against their Cambodian sanctuary.

*Note: This memorandum was produced solely by CIA. It was prepared by the Office of Economic Research and was coordinated with the Office of Current Intelligence and the Director's Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs.*

1. In the short time US and ARVN forces have been engaged in military operations in Cambodia, they have captured substantial quantities of enemy supplies. From 30 April through 17 May, the enemy has lost more than 5,500 tons of food, weapons, and ammunition as indicated in the following tabulation:

	<u>Short Tons</u>
Class I (food)	3,305
Class II (weapons)	75
Class V (ammunition)	2,152 <u>a/</u>
<i>Total</i>	<i>5,532</i>

*a. Net tonnage. Gross tonnage including crating and packaging would be 3,228 tons. The gross tonnage is a more accurate measure of the enemy's resupply burden.*

2. Food and ammunition comprised the most lucrative of supply categories tapped by the Allied operations while only a small amount of weapons have been captured. Geographically, the largest total tonnages -- some 2,000 tons -- were found in the so-called Fishhook area, which includes Base Areas 352 and 353 (see the map). Base Area 351, was the site of the largest caches of ammunition -- 1,479 tons -- and, in total tonnage, the second largest finds of the campaign. Important amounts of rice, weapons, and ammunition were found in Svay Rieng Province (Parrot's Beak), the Cambodian territory which juts eastward to within a few miles of Saigon, and ranks third in total tonnage geographically. The fourth most lucrative area was Ratanakiri Province (Base Areas 702 and 701) which borders on Laos and has long been an important channel of supplies to South Vietnam from the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

3. A handful of caches, such as those discovered in Base Area 351, have yielded most of the tonnages captured (see the table). Some of the base areas have yielded smaller stocks of arms and ammunition than expected. For example, Base Area 702 has been the traditional area of operations of Headquarters B-3 Front and the locale for



a major Binh Tram which coordinated the forwarding of men and supplies to the south along the main infiltration route. The weapons and ammunition discovered there to date were insignificant, less than 10 tons. Base Area 350 has been for some time one of the most important parts of the enemy's supply system for III Corps and is the area of operation for Rear Service Group (RSG) 70 which was thought to maintain a number of large storage facilities in the area. Less than 50 tons of supplies have thus far been uncovered in this area..

4. Base Areas 352/353 (Fishhook) have been considered highly important logistically; the incursions in these areas yielded large amounts of foodstuffs and relatively large amounts of ammunition (267 tons). Base Area 354, long the base for RSG 82 and the VC 9th Division, likewise yielded only small amounts of ammunition and only a handful of weapons. Base Areas 706/367 (Parrot's Beak) have long been known to contain a high concentration of logistical support facilities, including the headquarters for RSG 100; large tonnages of rice were discovered, about 1,300 weapons, and 327 tons of ammunition.

#### Communist Losses Compared to Stockpiles

5. Throughout the war in Indochina the Communist forces have adhered as closely as possible to a stockpiling concept that calls for supply reserves to exceed anticipated requirements by several fold. This stockpiling concept calls for the establishment of stores of food, weapons, and ammunition at three distinct echelons of command. Field stockpiles -- called combat stockpiles -- are maintained in all operational areas to meet the specific fire power requirements of units that are to be committed to combat, in addition to normal day-to-day requirements. The second type of stockpiles -- called campaign stockpiles -- are stored in more secure areas, but at locations still relatively close to potential combat areas in anticipation of forthcoming or potential military actions. Finally, contingency stockpiles -- called strategic stockpiles -- are established in base areas that have a high degree of security.

6. Strategic stockpiles have been established principally in Laos and Cambodia, although there

are undoubtedly some in South Vietnam in base areas deemed adequately secure. Campaign stockpiles have been established widely throughout the Cambodian base areas presently under attack as well as in Laos and in the more secure areas within South Vietnam. Combat stockpiles exist solely in South Vietnam unless they are designed to support specific military operations outside of South Vietnam. The various types of stockpiles are not necessarily maintained separately. For example, a single supply depot may contain both strategic and campaign stockpiles. Thus the chief distinction between the two would be one of warehouse accounting and planning.

7. Because record volumes of supplies moved south through the Laotian Panhandle during the dry season, there is every reason to believe that stockpiles in Cambodia were at a high level in April. This probability is underscored by the pattern of the enemy's stockpiling practices as observed over a period of many years. It is clear from the evidence gleaned from captured documents and interrogation reports that the enemy frequently fasts to maintain stockpiling commitments. Furthermore, the enemy's military doctrine gives high priority to the problem of assuring that VC/NVA forces are supported by ample supply reserves. Throughout the past several years reports of enemy supply shortages in South Vietnam have most frequently been laid to in-country distribution problems rather than empty warehouses or bunkers in the base areas to the rear.

8. We do not have any firm intelligence on the size of the enemy's stockpiles in Cambodia (or in South Vietnam or Laos) at the time the current operations began. From what we know of his logistics planning doctrine, the enemy's campaign stockpiles should be equal to six month's resupply requirements. Strategic reserves stockpiles should be equal, at a minimum, to an additional six months' resupply requirements and may have been equal to twelve months' requirements.

9. The significance of the enemy's present supply losses in Cambodia must be evaluated on the basis of judgments concerning the disposition of the enemy's strategic and campaign stockpiles. We

have assumed that the enemy has cached in Cambodia all of his strategic reserves. In addition, we have assumed that the enemy's campaign reserves (an additional six months' supply) were equally divided between Cambodia and South Vietnam. With these assumptions, a calculation of enemy stockpiles based on our limited knowledge would indicate that he had sufficient stockpiles to take care of 9-15 months' resupply requirements for lower II, III, and IV Corps, or between 9,000 and 15,000 tons of supplies and probably at the higher end of this range.

10. Our preliminary calculations of the enemy's stockpiles in Cambodia are compared to his supply losses thus far in the following tabulation:

Class of Supply	Short Tons		
	Estimated Enemy Stockpiles in Cambodia Apr 1970	Enemy Losses in Cambodia 30 Apr - 17 May	Losses as a Percent of Estimated Enemy Stockpiles
Food	6,200 - 10,370	3,300	32 - 53
Weapons and equipment	1,600 - 2,700	75	3 - 5
Ammunition	1,350 - 2,255	2,152	95 - 160
Total	9,150 - 15,330		

a. The range in the estimates reflects the uncertainty about the size of the enemy's strategic stockpiles in Cambodia.

11. While the total tonnage of supplies captured is large, the apparent stockpile depletion for the separate classes of supplies varies greatly. The very small tonnage of weapons lost in Cambodia (in relation to estimated stockpiles) suggests that the Allied operations have as yet had little impact on that category of supply.

12. Food losses are more serious, with one-third to one-half of the enemy's estimated food

caches having already been captured after only 17 days of operation. However, the replenishment of food stocks, almost entirely rice, can be accomplished relatively more easily than the replacement of weapons and ammunitions. Rice need not be hauled some 500 miles overland from North Vietnam but can be obtained from both South Vietnam and Cambodia. In fact, the incursions of VC/NVA forces deep into Cambodia may make it possible for the Communists to replace their rice losses in short order.\*

13. The losses of ammunition will undoubtedly pose a serious logistical problem for the enemy. The Communists have already lost between 95% and 160% of the tonnage of ammunition we calculated was stockpiled in Cambodia at the start of the current operations. However, a substantial share of the tonnage lost was 51 caliber ammunition. We have no satisfactory explanation at this time for the large quantities of this single caliber of information. It may also be that our calculations greatly understate the enemy's stockpiles of ammunition. He may, for example, be stockpiling ammunition at the same high rate observed in Northern Laos during Operation About-Face.\*\* In any event, the data that is in so far complicates our analysis considerably and more detail on the composition of these losses is necessary before their full significance can be assessed.

#### The Mix of Captured Weapons and Ammunition

14. Of the some 2,150 tons of ammunition captured in Cambodia thus far, at least 1,164 tons -- captured in Base Area 351 -- has consisted of 51-caliber ammunition, used in South Vietnam largely as an antiaircraft weapon. This surprisingly high and unexpected amount of 51-caliber ammunition (over 6 million rounds) clearly must have comprised a strategic reserve. If the 51-caliber ammunition is omitted from the comparisons made in the preceding section, the significance of the enemy losses of ammunition is greatly reduced. Enemy losses of ammunition, instead of being equivalent to 428 days of resupply requirements, would be equivalent to only 157 days.

\* For a discussion of the impact of rice losses on the VC/NVA forces, see paragraphs 27-32.

\*\* See Paragraph 24.

15. There is a strong probability that significant caches of enemy ammunition have yet to be uncovered in Cambodia. Small caches of ammunition -- totaling about 675 tons -- have been found so far in the base areas other than 351. A total of 267 tons have been captured in the Fishhook and 327 tons in the Parrot's Beak. Furthermore, the mix of ammunition captured thus far varies considerably from the average mix of a typical VC or NVA Main Force battalion -- 48% small arms and 52% heavy ammunition. The volume of heavy weapons ammunition captured in Cambodia has been disproportionately high by this standard. Furthermore, as indicated in the tabulation below, 50-caliber or larger ammunition constituted about 97% of total heavy ammunition losses. In the basic load of a VC/NVA Main Force battalion, 50-caliber or larger ammunition comprises about 75% of the total number of heavy ammunition rounds. Thus large quantities of other types of heavy ammunition rounds, mortar rounds, and rockets have yet to be found if, as seems likely, the enemy maintained balanced stockpiles of ammunition in the base areas. Ammunition losses by type include the following:

Type	Rounds
Small arms	3,690,276
50-caliber or larger	7,812,464
Antiaircraft artillery	159,047
Mortars	38,879
Rockets (large)	843
Rockets (small)	14,920
Recoilless rifle	14,296
<i>Total</i>	<i>11,730,725</i>
Including 50-caliber and larger	8,040,449

16. The 248 tons of mortar rounds and large-caliber rockets (107 mm and larger) captured in Cambodia is equal to 29% of the expenditures of these types of ammunition by the Communists in all of South Vietnam during the 12-month period ending in March 1970. Looked at from another point of view, these losses are small compared with the 1,000 tons of these types of ammunition that were captured by Allied forces in South Vietnam during 1969.

17. To date, only 9,109 individual weapons and 1,233 crew-served weapons have been captured. Individual weapons represent about 88% of the total -- only slightly higher than the average mix of individual to crew-served weapons that is found in a VC/NVA Main Force battalion. This indicates that the weapon caches were stocked in a balanced fashion, appropriate to enemy resupply requirements. However, the total is small compared with the 430 tons of weapons captured in South Vietnam in 1969.

Losses in Cambodia Compared with Those in South Vietnam

18. The heavy losses of supplies suffered by the Communists in Cambodia can be put in perspective by comparing them with the total supply losses sustained by the enemy in the entire year of 1969, as shown in the following tabulation:

Class of Supplies	South Vietnam Jan-Dec 1969	Short Tons Cambodia 30 Apr-17 May 1970
Class I (food)	5,883	3,305
Class II (weapons)	430	75
Class V (ammunition)	1,638	2,152

19. The tonnage of enemy ammunition captured in Cambodia already exceeds the total tonnage of ammunition found in enemy caches in South Vietnam in all of 1969. However, if the large cache of 50-caliber and larger ammunition in Base Area 351 -- 1,479 tons -- had not been uncovered, the ammunition captured in Cambodia would have been equal to 41% of the 1969 total. A similar comparison shows that enemy food losses in Cambodia have also been of major proportions. In just over two weeks in Cambodia the Allies have captured an amount of rice equal to 56% of that captured throughout South Vietnam in 1969. Weapons losses by the enemy in Cambodia

have been less dramatic. The 75 tons of weapons so far captured equals only 17% of the tonnage of weapons captured in South Vietnam last year. However, stated differently, the Communists in South Vietnam lost an average of 1.2 tons of weapons a day in 1969 as a result of Allied ground activities. In the present Cambodian operations, their losses have averaged 4.4 tons a day.

20. The above comparisons between the enemy's losses in Cambodia compared with losses in South Vietnam in 1969 masks the fact that for the past 12 months enemy losses have been declining. Of the 2,927 caches that were seized in South Vietnam during 1969, 845 (accounting for 57% of the year's tonnages) were discovered in the first quarter of the year. Supply losses decreased in the second quarter and continued at relatively low levels until February of this year. Thus the Cambodian successes are especially significant in that they are again imposing a resupply burden on the enemy that the Communists had largely been able to escape since the end of the first quarter of 1969.

21. One difficulty in making meaningful comparisons between enemy losses in South Vietnam and Cambodia is that in Cambodia Allied forces have had access to the enemy's strategic and campaign stockpiles while in South Vietnam enemy supply losses are, for the most part, the sum of hundreds and even thousands of small caches. Only occasionally do Allied forces unearth a cache which would rate as a campaign stockpile, and no strategic stockpile has ever been discovered.\* For a comparison

\* For example, during the first quarter of 1969, when enemy losses in South Vietnam were particularly heavy, the following were the major caches uncovered:

	<u>Location</u>	<u>Tons of Supplies</u>
<u>Jan 1969</u>		
IV Corps	Kien Giang	20 ("munitions")
I Corps	Quang Nam	225 (rice)
III Corps	Tay Ninh	50 (ammunition)
<u>Feb 1969</u>		
III Corps	Tay Ninh	323 (food)
<u>Mar 1970</u>		
II Corps	Lam Dong	346 (food)

resupply requirements for that area, clearly indicating that General Vang Pao's forces had captured the Communists' strategic stockpile of ammunition in the Plaine des Jarres area. Furthermore, these losses highlight the importance the North Vietnamese have placed on maintaining extremely large supply bases close to the battle front.

25. A more detailed comparison of losses in the two areas is presented in the following tabulation:

	<u>Cambodia a/</u>	<u>Northern Laos (About Face)</u>
<u>Weapons</u>	<u>Units</u>	
Individual	9,109	4,485
Crew-served	1,233	616
Ratio of individual to crew-served	7.4:1	7.3:1
<u>Ammunition</u>	<u>Rounds</u>	
Small arms	3,690,276	1,847,000
50-caliber and larger	7,812,464	220,200
Grenades	6,922	14,000
Antiaircraft rounds	159,047	86,000
Mortar rounds	38,879	143,000
Rockets		
Small	14,920	18,000
Large	843	8,000
Recoilless rifle	14,296	N.A.
Mines	1,865	N.A.

a. Through 17 May.

There are several striking differences in the composition of the enemy's ammunition caches in northern Laos and Cambodia. The tabulation above shows that enemy losses of small arms ammunition has been greater in Cambodia than in northern Laos (3.7 million rounds compared with 1.8 million rounds). However, because of larger enemy forces in II, III, and IV Corps, the Cambodian losses of



this type of ammunition appear to be somewhat below the stockpile levels which are suggested by the northern Laos experience.

26. There is a strong implication from the comparative data that very substantial quantities of mortars and rockets are yet unfound in Cambodia. In Laos, 143,000 mortar rounds and 26,000 rocket rounds were captured, compared with only 39,000 mortar and 16,000 rocket rounds captured thus far in Cambodia; about 8,000 large rockets were captured in northern Laos compared with only 843 rockets in Cambodia. The comparisons of rockets are puzzling because of the important role they have played in the enemy's strategy and tactics against Allied bases and population centers in South Vietnam.

#### The Rice Situation

27. The large caches of rice which have been captured in Allied operations reflect the important role that Cambodia has traditionally played in feeding Communist troops. An estimated 10,000-20,000 tons of rice has moved annually from Cambodian markets to VC/NVA forces in the rice-deficit areas of II, III, and IV Corps and in adjacent Cambodian sanctuaries. In former years this trade has been sanctioned (and at times managed) by the Cambodian government, and it has been carried out for the most part in normal commercial channels.

28. The 3,305 tons of rice lost by the Communists represents only about a 5-months supply in terms of the requirements of Communist forces in southern South Vietnam for Cambodian rice. This amount can be readily replaced from existing Cambodian stocks in the nine border provinces where the Communists are now actively exerting some degree of military control.\*

29. The bumper 1969/70 Cambodian rice harvest was completed by January, and a minor crop is nearing harvest. Production in the provinces to which the Communists now have access is estimated to total a little more than one million tons of

\* *Ratanakiri, Mondolkiri, Kratie, Kompong Cham, Prey Veng, Svay Rieng, Kandal, Takeo, and Kampot. The majority of the rice is produced in the latter six provinces.*

milled rice. After deducting for consumption and making allowances for re-seeding needs and losses, there remains a surplus of about 200,000 tons. While a portion of this surplus probably reached terminal export markets in Phnom Penh and Kompong Som (formerly Sihanoukville) during the peak marketing months of March and April, a large amount still remains within the nine provinces, in the hands of millers and merchants. Conservatively, the Communists have access to at least 50,000 tons of rice, excluding very large stocks being held by the Cambodians for local consumption. The Communists can freely draw upon this marketable surplus and, if the need were to arise, upon consumption stocks as well. It seems highly unlikely that there could be serious resistance to Communist demands in those areas where the enemy maintains an active military presence -- regardless of any official government strictures against the sale of rice to the Communists.

30. South Vietnam has also just harvested a very large crop of rice -- estimated to be about 17% higher than last year and the largest in five years. The enemy has the ability to buy Vietnamese rice almost at will on the open market, although in those immediate areas where the need for rice is greatest (as an offset to the loss of caches in Cambodia), production does not meet local requirements.

31. Despite this generally favorable supply picture, the enemy is likely to continue to be troubled with intermittent and localized rice shortages. For example, during the past year or so, there have been fairly frequent reports of shortages among Communist forces in II and III Corps, particularly in the western regions. These apparently have stemmed from procurement and distribution problems; captured documents cite as causes insufficient porters, Allied surveillance of roads and trails, transport blockades, and the steady expansion of government control which has increased the reluctance of the population to support the Viet Cong.

32. In summary, the enemy in Cambodia has access to large amounts of rice -- more than enough to meet requirements and far more than the amount lost to Allied operations. The enemy's

more active military posture throughout eastern Cambodia will facilitate the purchase (or confiscation) of required rice stocks. Indeed, it is likely that the enemy has already taken steps to replace losses. However, despite ample rear area supplies, the Communists will continue to face forward distribution problems within South Vietnam. These will undoubtedly be aggravated in the border regions by the greater freedom of movement now exercised by Allied troops.

#### Ability of the Communists to Replace Supplies

33. Allied actions in Cambodia have undoubtedly created uncertainty for the North Vietnamese logistical planners. The Communists logistical stockpiles in Cambodia have been seriously depleted, and even though all types of weapons and ammunition have not been captured in critical amounts, the Communist forces are off balance and must adjust to the new Allied initiatives and a heavy logistics burden. The North Vietnamese do not know the quantities of supplies which will be ultimately captured nor can they be certain of the security of the north-south logistical system in Cambodia. Furthermore, although large caches of supplies still exist in Cambodia, the Communist forces may not have as ready access to these supplies as in the past. The following discussion analyzes the enemy's capability to make up his losses in Cambodia and to maintain his logistical pipeline from North Vietnam and Laos to II, III, and IV Corps in view of the rapidly oncoming rainy season.

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### Transportation Options

#### *Roads in the Panhandle*

36. In past years, enemy logistic activity in the Panhandle has been largely curtailed during the rainy season, and much of the road system -- particularly south of Route 922 -- left abandoned and unused. [redacted] indicates that most of the southern route structure (Route 92/96) and the east/west route (Route 110) could be maintained and kept motorable, but at a considerable cost in manpower. Only one segment of Route 92/96 -- the rugged 40-mile long segment between Ban Bac and Chavane -- would present formidable problems to the North Vietnamese engineers. If this crucial stretch of road could be kept open and the balance of the system provided with adequate drainage control, overland travel can be assured into the tri-border area and west -- via Route 110 -- to the edge of the Se Kong River. From there supplies could move into Cambodia. As an alternative to transiting the critical Ban Bac - Chavane road segment, the enemy could truck supplies to the Se Kong near Ban Bac to be free-floated down to transshipment points near or below Chavane. (see the following discussion).

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#### *Waterways*

37. Recent enemy incursions on the Bolovens Plateau and raids against several Cambodian river towns on the Me Kong and the Se Kong suggest that

the Communists are attempting to secure an alternate north-south supply channel to their beleaguered Cambodian base areas using these water routes.

38. About 60 miles south of Tchepone near Ban Bac the Se Kong meets the Ho Chi Minh Trail and begins its 200-mile course toward the Me Kong well within the Cambodian border. The river is navigable only by pirogues and similar small waterborne logistical craft for the first 50 miles south of Ban Bac. It winds through a mountainous area containing three short segments where portage is necessary. The enemy for years has used this segment of the Se Kong to free-float supplies downstream to transshipment points where the goods are reloaded on trucks for further southward movement. The remaining course of the Se Kong to the Cambodian border is a clear channel through the year and is navigable by craft drawing two and one-half feet.\*

39. If the Communists are able to extend their control to the Me Kong River, they would have access to a relatively safe, year-round water route extending from north of the Bolovens Plateau in Laos to within 50 miles of Phnom Penh. Lateral roads and several navigable waterways extending eastward from the river could be used for relatively rapid motorized shuttling of supplies into existing base areas near the South Vietnamese border or new base areas further inside Cambodia.

#### *Trail System South of Tri-Border*

40. In addition to the water routes the enemy could continue to use the extensive trail network south of the tri-border area. Porterage of supplies on these trails would pose no serious problems during the wet season as was demonstrated by the high rate of personnel infiltration through the trail system during the summer of 1968. If, however, Allied sweeping actions become intensive, the enemy would seek alternative routes. A shift of porterage operations westward beyond the range of Allied activities would be unlikely, particularly between Base Areas 701 and 740, because of

*\* At high water this stretch of the river is navigable to craft drawing up to four feet of water. During the wet season months, boat traffic is little affected by the increased flow of water and flood conditions.*

the low marshy terrain and the lack of connecting high ground. Therefore, the enemy might choose under this situation to increase reliance on the Se Kong - Me Kong water route.

#### Availability of Supplies in the Laotian Panhandle

41. We believe that the enemy maintains in the Laotian Panhandle large strategic and campaign stockpiles of food, POL, and arms and ammunition which could be immediately drawn upon to replenish Cambodian losses. In this connection, the largest category of ammunition losses in Cambodia -- 50-caliber and above -- is stocked in the Panhandle in substantial quantities.\* While it is impossible to say with certainty how long such a resupply operation would take under present conditions, transfers within the Laotian Panhandle might be accomplished in a week or two and the portering operations (or waterway transport) within Cambodia might add an additional two to four weeks, depending on ultimate destinations and uncertainties associated with Allied military action.

42. In summary, the North Vietnamese probably could replenish much of their arms and ammunition losses to date from existing stockpiles in the central and southern Panhandle within a few months. However, in the weeks ahead, should Allied forces capture rockets, mortar rounds, and small arms ammunition on the order of magnitude of current losses of antiaircraft ammunition or substantially increase the number of weapons captured, the logistics task would be considerably increased. The importance to the enemy of losses in Cambodia should be reflected in the nature, intensity, and duration of logistic operations noted in the Panhandle over the next several weeks.

#### Effect on Enemy Operations in South Vietnam

43. Recent Communist supply losses and the presence of Allied forces in Cambodia will force the Communists to reconsider their strategy in South Vietnam. The enemy forces, especially in III Corps, are undoubtedly off balance and some tactical adjustments will be necessary as local shortages appear. Furthermore, the conflict in

\* This category accounts for 50% of antiaircraft firings in the Panhandle.

Cambodia may inhibit enemy actions in South Vietnam as the enemy attempts to redistribute supplies and hoard manpower in the face of the new Allied initiatives. However, we believe that the enemy's stockpiles of arms and ammunition already positioned in South Vietnam are largely intact and that the Communists retain the logistical capability to undertake stepped-up combat intermittently if they are willing to accept the high casualties that attend increased aggressiveness on their part. At the same time, the enemy has a capability to set up a renewed logistics flow through Laos, or could draw down stockpiles in that country, so that within a few months he will have made measurable progress in rebuilding his stocks in Cambodia. The degree of success in carrying out this resupply operation would in large measure depend on the extent to which Allied forces continue to maintain a ground presence in Cambodia. We believe that the threat of casualties rather than supply shortages will continue to be the main deterrent of enemy operations in South Vietnam.

44. This estimate assumes that the enemy will choose militarily to continue to maintain roughly the strategic posture of the past year -- sustained lulls punctuated by high points involving numerous shellings, sapper attacks, and limited ground probes by small enemy units. The logistic requirements for such actions are relatively small -- well below the level of support the enemy would need for large-scale sustained offensive operations such as were mounted during TET 1968. In any case what limited and temporary effects on enemy plans the Cambodian supply losses may occasion, they will impinge mainly on the enemy's posture in III and IV Corps. It seems unlikely that I Corps, which has seen some of the heaviest fighting, and II Corps would be affected; the rear-base supply sources for these areas are in Laos or in the mountainous and isolated northeastern part of Cambodia where supply activities have presumably been relatively uninterrupted by the present Allied operations.

Summary

45. During the first 17 days of operations in Cambodia, US and GVN forces have captured more than 5,500 tons of supplies. This tonnage represents substantial losses to the enemy and includes some strategic reserves with which the enemy backstops its major war strategy in South Vietnam. The enemy's stockpiles, just prior to the Allied moves, are calculated to be at least 9,000 to 15,000 tons and may well be greater.

46. Food (principally rice) represents the largest single category of supply losses -- nearly two-thirds of the total. The 3,300 tons captured to date represents from 30% to 50% of the enemy's estimated food caches and represents about a 5-months' requirement of Cambodian rice for the enemy forces in southern South Vietnam. The second largest tonnage captured is ammunition. The 2,150 tons are equivalent to more than a year's resupply requirements and exceed the total ammunition lost to Allied ground action in South Vietnam in all of 1969.

47. A disproportionately large amount of the ammunition captured in Cambodia -- over 60% -- consists of 50-caliber or larger ammunition, used in South Vietnam largely for antiaircraft purposes. This suggests both the magnitude of the enemy's reserves in Cambodia and also the strong possibility that significant caches of other types of ammunition have yet to be uncovered. The very small tonnage of captured weapons and equipment -- 75 tons -- does not represent a significant loss to the enemy. More than five times that amount was captured in South Vietnam in 1969.

48. It must be emphasized that the supply loss figures are changing rapidly from day to day. Their full impact cannot be gauged until the Allied operations are completed. Initially, it appears that the Allied actions have inflicted a sharp blow to the enemy's logistical system in Cambodia and undoubtedly have placed a ceiling on the types of offensive activities he will be able to undertake in the near future. However, there are several factors which will operate in the enemy's favor. The Communists maintain large amounts of stocks



within South Vietnam which should be adequate for the time being to support military activities at current relatively low levels and even permit an occasional high point. There are large stockpiles -- particularly of large-caliber ammunition -- in the Laotian Panhandle which can be transferred southward in a matter of weeks. The Communists losses of foodstuffs, although substantial, are not critical. Bumper harvests in both Cambodia and South Vietnam should provide ready sources for replacing losses. In fact, the enemy probably now has access to larger quantities of Cambodian rice as a result of his expanded offensive actions than before the Allied border incursions commenced.

49. The Communists have already begun to make adjustments in their logistics effort in response to the Cambodian developments. They now intend to keep the logistics system in the Laotian Panhandle operative during the current rainy season. Furthermore, there are signs that the enemy intends to make more extensive use of the river system in southern Laos and northeastern Cambodia. The augmentation of supply flows southward will be difficult but by no means impossible. The magnitude of the task for the enemy will be determined by the final tally of supply losses and the extent to which the Allied forces continue to maintain a ground presence in Cambodia sufficient to prevent the stockpiles from being reconstituted.

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Cumulative Results of US and ARVN Operations  
in Cambodia  
(as of 17 May, 2000 Hours EDT)

Supply Item	Parrot's Beak a/	Fishhook	Base Areas						Terminated Operations b/	Total
			702	701	351	350	Cuu Long I 704/709	Cuu Long II 704		
Individual weapons	1,037	3,958	803	109	898	216	712	86	1,290	9,109 c/
Crew-served weapons	255	519	23	18	86	29	112	7	184	1,233 c/
Rice (tons)	635	1,704	599	37	95	29	15	0	191	3,305
Vehicles	8	170	3	0	19	1	7	0	3	211
Ammunition (tons)	327	267	7	6	1,479	12	23	d/	31	2,152

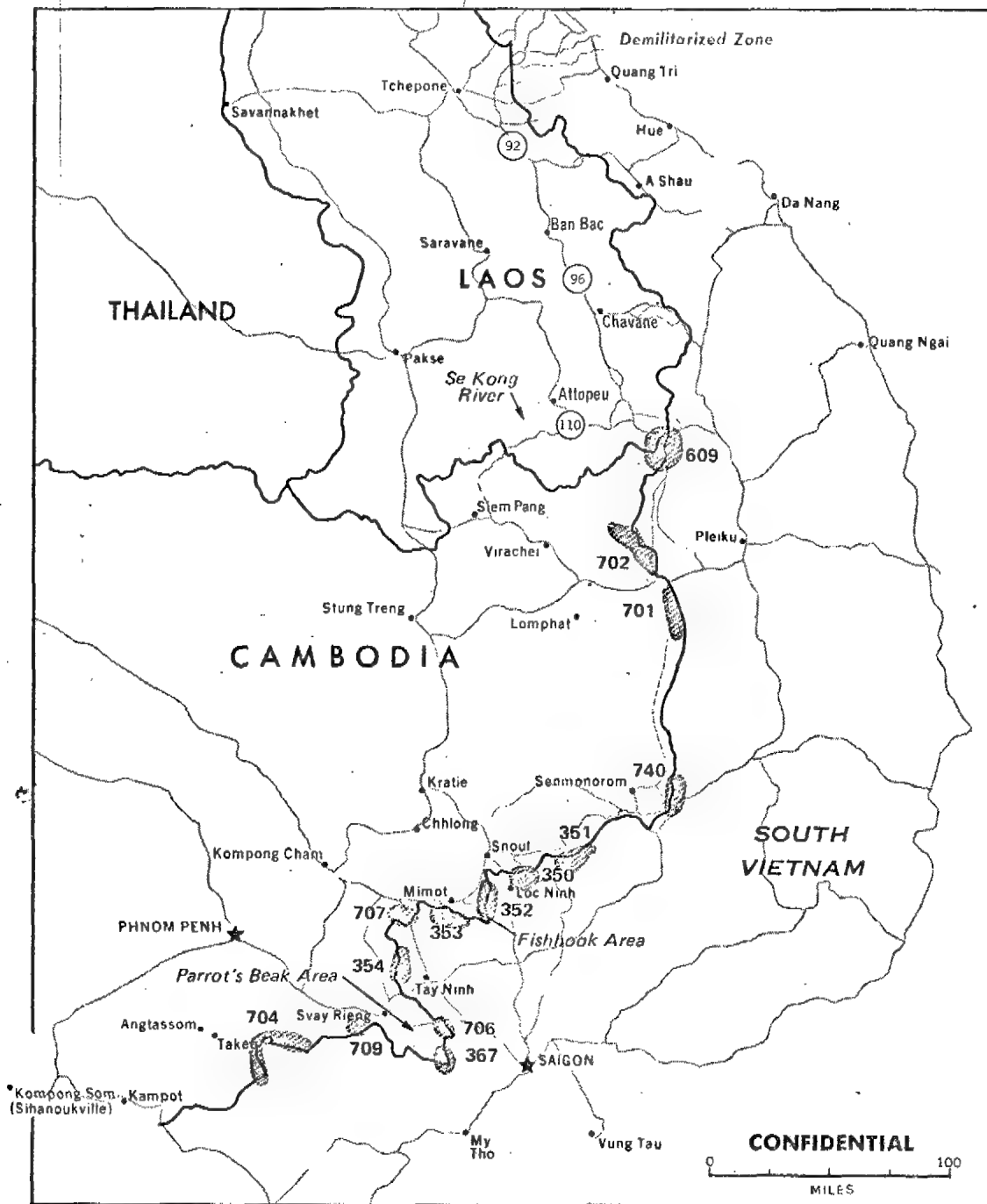
a. Totals for Rock Crusher IV previously reported in this column now appear in the Terminated Operations column.

b. Operation Rock Crusher IV and Operation TIA CHOP (EA 354).

c. Represents the loss of about 75 tons of arms.

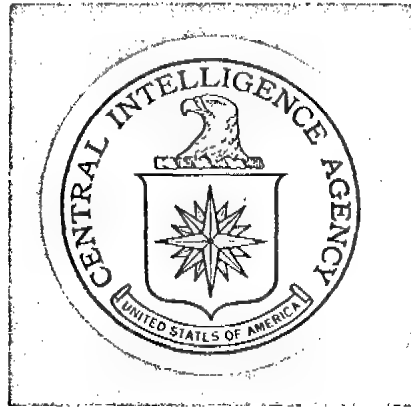
d. None reported.

VC/NVA Base Areas Along Cambodian Border



Secret

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DIRECTORATE OF  
INTELLIGENCE

# Intelligence Memorandum

*Enemy Supply Losses In Cambodia*

*(Revised)*

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ER IM 70-70

May 1970

Copy No.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
Directorate of Intelligence  
May 1970

SUBJECT: Note To Holders Of CIA Intelligence  
Memorandum, ER IM 70-70, *Enemy*  
*Supply Losses in Cambodia,*  
May 1970

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1. In our recent preliminary analysis of VC/NVA supply losses in Cambodia we noted that a seemingly excessive share of the enemy ammunition losses consisted of rounds of 50-caliber and larger. The latest available data from MACV revises downward greatly the take of this category of ammunition -- from 7.8 million rounds to 2.6 million rounds.\* This revision and other minor adjustments in field reporting reduce the total weight of ammunition (Class V) captured in Cambodia from the 2,152 short tons given in our report to 1,182 tons.

2. The data used in our initial report had suggested that between 95% and 160% of the Communist's estimated stockpiles of ammunition had been destroyed. Such high shares of losses to stockpiles raised the possibility that our stockpile estimates were understated because a large share of total enemy ammunition losses consisted of 51-caliber ammunition alone. The revised data indicate that enemy ammunition losses amount to between 52% and 88% of our estimate of enemy stockpiles of ammunition in Cambodia at the start of Allied operations. The mix of the ammunition captured to date is now much more consistent with our understanding of the weapons assigned to a typical VC or NVA Main Force battalion.

\* The reason for the major reporting error from the field is not fully understood. One report has it that "cans" of 51-caliber ammunition were mis-translated as "cases."

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3. The new data revise several other comparisons made in the report. Instead of exceeding the total ammunition losses in South Vietnam during 1969, the Cambodian losses are now equivalent to about 72% of enemy ammunition losses in South Vietnam last year. They represent the equivalent of 154 days of resupply requirements for the enemy forces in lower II, III, and IV Corps. The revised data also show that the enemy's ammunition losses in Cambodia are less than half -- 46% -- the losses the Communists suffered in northern Laos last year.

4. Our conclusion that supply losses in Cambodia have inflicted a sharp blow to the enemy's logistical system in Cambodia still stands. The impact should not be overstated, however, because the enemy retains intact stockpiles in Laos and South Vietnam and has the capability to mount a major resupply effort to rebuild the captured stockpiles.

5. The tabulations on pages 3 and 4 are revisions and updates through 21 May (2000 hours) of the tabulations appearing in paragraphs 10 and 25 of our initial memorandum.

Short Tons			
Class of Supply	Estimated Enemy Stockpiles in Cambodia Apr 1970	Enemy Losses in Cambodia 30 Apr - 21 May	Losses as a Percent of Estimated Enemy Stockpiles
Food	6,200 - 10,370	3,890	38 - 63
Weapons and equipment	1,600 - 2,700	90	3 - 6
Ammunition	1,350 - 2,255	1,182	52 - 88
Total	9,150 - 15,330		

a. The range in the estimates reflects the uncertainty about the size of the enemy's strategic stockpiles in Cambodia.

	<u>Cambodia a/</u>	<u>Northern Laos (About Face)</u>
<u>Weapons</u>	<u>Units</u>	
Individual	10,253	4,485
Crew-served	1,566	616
Ratio of individual to crew-served	6.6:1	7.3:1
<u>Ammunition</u>	<u>Rounds</u>	
Small arms	4,717,436	1,847,000
50-caliber and larger	2,587,074	220,200
Grenades	8,942	14,000
Antiaircraft rounds	126,972	86,000
Mortar rounds	21,304	143,000
Rockets		
Small	11,964	18,000
Large	1,056	8,000
Recoilless rifle	16,827	N.A.
Mines	2,061	N.A.
<u>a. Through 21 May.</u>		



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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

20 MAY 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

SUBJECT: Impact on the Enemy of Ammunition Losses in Cambodia (U)

This memorandum is in response to General Haig's request for an estimate of the impact on the enemy of the capture of ammunition in Cambodia and any other related information.

It is still too early to measure with confidence the impact of the Cambodian operations on the enemy. The real value of the operation will only be apparent months from now when we see how it has spurred Vietnamization; enabled us to accelerate troop redeployments; reduced U.S. combat casualties; and provided incentives for productive negotiations. Also the data are uncertain and any conclusions are subject to a variety of factors which cannot be quantified.

To determine the real impact of the capture of equipment and supplies we would need to know the size of the stocks of the VC/NVA forces in Cambodia, Southern Laos, and South Vietnam. Also we need good estimates of the time it will take the North Vietnamese to move replacement supplies down through Laos into Cambodia and South Vietnam. Our data on the size of VC/NVA stocks is speculative at best and our knowledge of the NVN logistics system in Laos is incomplete. Nevertheless, we are able to make some tentative assessments.

Food Supplies Rice is by far the largest component of the captured material, but the impact on the VC/NVA is likely to be transitory. Some 3,305 tons of rice had been found as of May 18. MACV estimates that amount of rice would feed 12,070 soldiers for a year or 101 VC/NVA battalions (the enemy strength in III and IV Corps) for 249 days. Unfortunately, this rice may not be difficult to replace. Cambodia is a heavy producer of rice and the crop this past year was unusually large, totaling about one million tons. CIA estimates that approximately 80,000 tons of rice were produced in the four eastern Cambodian provinces now largely controlled by NVA. Because of the disruption of roads and waterways and dislocation of normal market patterns, much of this rice will be available for the VC/NVA to confiscate or purchase (the captured rice would be worth about \$1 million at official exchange rates). Thus, they will probably be able to replace the rice stocks captured fairly quickly.

Ammunition Our forces have captured very substantial amounts of ammunition and this could have a significant impact on VC/NVA military capabilities. To estimate the impact of capture of enemy ammunition stocks, we compared

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reported captured munitions with estimates of VC/NVA requirements in South Vietnam in order to determine how many "days of supply" our forces have captured. It is important that we avoid misinterpreting this data. The real impact of the capture of this ammunition depends on the size of VC/NVA stocks in Southern Laos, Cambodia, and South Vietnam. The smaller their "safety level" the more they will be hurt by our operations. The larger their "safety level," the less they will be hurt.

The first approach compares gross tonnages of ammunition captured with estimates of enemy daily requirements.<sup>1/</sup> The VC/NVA forces in SVN consume, or lose to allied actions in SVN, about 15-20 tons of ammunition per day. Thus, the 1,866 tons captured equates to about 90-125 days of consumption. If you exclude the forces in I Corps who are supplied directly from Laos, the impact rises to 135-185 days.

The second approach uses DIA/MACV detailed estimates of the average expenditures (in number of rounds) of basic types of ammunition. These estimates, based on 1969 experience, are very rough and must be used accordingly. The table below lists the major ammunition types, amounts captured and the computed impact in terms of days of consumption.

IMPLICATIONS OF VC/NVA AMMUNITION LOSSES IN CAMBODIA

	Rate of Expenditure <sup>a/</sup> (Daily Average Rounds)	Ammunition Captured	
		Total No. Rounds <sup>b/</sup>	No. Supply Days
Small Arms	68,500	3,690,276	54
Machine Gun	n.a.	7,812,464	-
Anti-Aircraft	n.a.	159,047	-
Mortar Rounds	295	38,879	132
Recoilless Rifle Rounds	14	14,296	1,021
Mines	n.a.	1,865	-
Grenades	n.a.	6,922	-

<sup>a/</sup> Based on 1969 expenditure rates.

<sup>b/</sup> As of May 18.

Note: n.a. = not available.

<sup>1/</sup> VC/NVA requirements are subject to wide variations depending on levels of enemy activity and success of allied operations in destroying stocks. For example in 1969, the DIA estimates that VC/NVA ammunition requirements (expended plus captured and interdicted) range from 22 tons per day in the first quarter to 8 tons in the fourth quarter. Moreover DIA and CIA estimates vary. We used 15-20 tons per day which is the DIA 1969 average range and is more conservative than the CIA estimates.

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Rockets General Haig's memorandum asked specifically about the rockets captured in Cambodia and the possible impact on enemy attacks by fire. During the first three months of 1970, the VC/NVA forces are estimated to have expended an average of 190 rounds of Rocket/Mortar/Recoilless Rifle rounds per day. The number of rounds of this type ammunition captured (68,938) represents about one year of supply. They also expended an estimated 17 rounds of large rocket (107mm, 122mm, 150mm) a day. About 870 rounds of this type of ammunition have been captured representing about 50 days supply. Again, the impact on their operations depends on their stockpiles.

Weapons The 9,109 individual weapons would equip about 45 current strength VC/NVA infantry battalions or about 45% of the current number of enemy units in II and III Corps. In addition over 1,200 crew served weapons have been captured.

Estimated Supply Stockpiles To judge the real impact of our Cambodian operations we need an approximate estimate of the VC/NVA stocks in South Vietnam and adjacent areas. The table below summarizes my staff's efforts to develop an estimate of stock levels of ammunition and equipment. First, they estimated the amounts that have come in by ship through Sihanoukville adding to it the amounts estimated to have been moved into Laos from NVN during the past two dry seasons. They subtracted amounts claimed to have been destroyed by air strikes or consumed in Laos. Finally, they subtracted estimated consumption in SVN (including the caches our forces discovered). This gave them an estimate of possible VC/NVA stocks of ammunition and equipment in South Vietnam which ranged from 12,000 to 30,000 tons. If these estimates are roughly right, the supplies captured in Cambodia would amount to 5-15% of total stocks. However, the remaining supplies would be enough to meet VC/NVA needs for 1-1/2 to 4 years. While these stockpiles seem extremely large, recent studies of VC/NVA logistics practices indicate they attempt to maintain large reserves -- often in excess of one year. Therefore it is not inconceivable that they have stockpiles of this magnitude.

ENEMY AMMUNITION AND EQUIPMENT STOCKPILES  
CAMBODIA, SOUTHERN LAOS, AND SOUTH VIETNAM  
(October 1968 - March 1970)

<u>Supply Inputs</u>	<u>Ammunitions and Arms (Tons)</u>
To Southern Laos from NVN <u>a/</u>	57,300
To VC/NVA via Sihanoukville	3,200
	<u>60,500</u>
<u>Less</u>	
Losses to Air Strikes in Southern Laos <u>b/</u>	14,300 to 32,300
Consumed in Southern Laos	5,400
Consumed or Captured in SVN	10,800
	<u>30,500 to 48,500</u>
Net Available for Stockpiling (Cambodia, Southern Laos, SVN)	12,000 to 30,000

a/ 52% of total shipments are estimated to be arms and ammunition. (Composition based on all-source intelligence.)

b/ Source: CIA estimates show 25% of inputs from NVN destroyed; USAF estimates show 56%.

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NVN's ability to Rebuild their Stockpile The other key consideration is the time it will take the North Vietnamese to rebuild their stocks in Southern Laos and Cambodia.

Sensors placed along the roads into SVN indicate during the dry season just ending (November-April) the North Vietnamese shipped over 100 tons per day (primarily ammunition and other military supplies) into SVN from NVN via Laos. In addition, the enemy supply system has substantial additional capability -- for instance, during peak weeks in February 1970 over 280 tons per day moved into SVN via Laos. Although the NVN logistics system in Laos essentially ceased operating last wet season, recent intelligence indicates Laotian supply flows will continue during the upcoming wet season -- using all weather routes and rivers. While the rains will degrade the logistic system, it is likely NVN will be able to continue to move substantial supply tonnage through Laos. At a shipment rate of 25 tons per day North Vietnam could replace the Cambodian ammunition and equipment losses in about 75 days.

Getting the supplies repositioned in the base areas after transiting the Laotian corridor will take additional time. There is some evidence that the enemy may be attempting to secure a river route from the lower Laotian Panhandle to Kratie (Cambodia) on the Mekong River, which is reasonably close to the Cambodian base camps along the SVN border. If this route can be used, travel time from Southern Laos will be shortened. Also, there are some unconfirmed reports that the enemy has captured large stocks of Cambodian Army supplies.

This does not mean that the losses of supplies will not affect the VC/NVA. Even after U.S. troops withdraw from Cambodia, the RVNAF threat to Cambodian base areas will remain, and the North Vietnamese may have to change their system of infiltrating into III and IV Corps or at least relocate deeper into Cambodian territory. Even then supplies will have to be dispersed. Perhaps most importantly, the VC/NVA can no longer mass with impunity for attacks on SVN outposts and cities.

#### Summary

It is important that we view the impact of the Cambodian operations within the perspective of longer term results. Since the enemy has manpower reserves and can replenish stocks, the numbers of enemy killed or weapons and ammunition captured are only important in terms of our objectives of entering Cambodia in the first place, which were: (1) to permit the U.S. to continue or accelerate U.S. troop withdrawals, (2) to continue the Vietnamization program successfully, (3) to reduce friendly casualties, and (4) to stimulate meaningful negotiations.

Preliminary reports indicate that the morale of the RVNAF units has greatly improved. There are potential major benefits to be derived from this development in terms of long term U.S. and RVN goals. But there are potential negative aspects as well. The RVNAF successes in Cambodia may reinforce their penchant for large operations, for example, and have a deleterious effect on pacification and security. In any event, it is

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important that in assessing the success of the Cambodian operations, we do not succumb to the temptation of concentrating on day-to-day results and thereby lose sight of our strategic objectives.

I again emphasize this assessment must be considered preliminary. We are continuing our appraisal of the Cambodian campaign and will provide you with additional analyses as the situation clarifies.



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